1: Jochelson E-5 (1900-01) 1908 RY4 Koryak RY4

XIII. — SOCIAL LIFE.

ANCIENT FORMS OF SOCIAL LIFE. — Social units, in the sense of organized tribal or gentile groups, do not exist among the Koryak. The agnatic family is the social unit. We do, however, find certain facts which seem to indicate the incipient formation of social groups exceeding the limits of a large patriarchal family. One such element, as I have stated before, is the relationship through marriage. Families which enter into such relationships thereby assume certain reciprocal material and moral obligations.

In those customs of the Koryak which refer to social relations, two antithetical tendencies are clearly discernible. One of these tendencies, which we might call anti-social, furthers the isolation of family groups of blood-relatives. The other tendency, on the contrary, develops the germs of a broader social organization. This antagonism in the social life of the Koryak was more marked before the advent of the Russians. Natural evolution would undoubtedly have led to an increasing predominance of the social element. Under the influence of the Russians, however, the social structure of the Koryak has degenerated. All antagonism having become obliterated, their present social life is colorless, and an independent development of social forms can no longer be expected.

I shall attempt to reconstruct the ancient social life of the Koryak from traditions as well as from still discernible survivals of the past. Constant wars, not only with other peoples, but between the separate groups of the Koryak themselves, and the ravages of blood-revenge between the families, rendered life insecure. Every stranger was regarded as a possible enemy. If an unknown man appeared in the settlement or the camp, he was at once asked where he came from, his weapons were inspected, and he was forced into a contest in order that his strength and agility might be ascertained. Then only was he admitted to the house. I was told of an ancient Koryak brave who, before attacking a man, would appear before him in disguise, in a miserable condition, his clothes in rags, and carrying a poor bow. In the ensuing contest he would defend himself but feebly, trying meanwhile to find out the strength of his adversary. During the contests at feasts, the warriors of the various settlements would carefully note each other's strength and methods, in order to profit by the knowledge thus obtained when real feuds would arise.

The attitude towards an outsider as an enemy or ill-wisher found expression not only in the fear of physical injury, but also in the fear of the evil

1: Jochelson E-5 (1900-01) 1908 RY1 Koryak RY4

In another myth[1] Big-Raven's elder son, Eme'mqut, bids his younger brother Big-Light to bring back to life a girl of the kamak whom he had killed, that they might live in peace with their neighbors.

A terrible case of blood-revenge is narrated in the district chief's report to the Governor, of Dec. 31, 1882.[2] An Alutor had killed another while sharing the catch of a seal-hunt. With the help of relatives and friends, the culprit succeeded in taking such elaborate precautions for his personal safety, that the attempts of the hostile group to avenge themselves repeatedly failed. At last the relatives of the victim succeeded, under cover of darkness, in creeping up to the house of the murderer. They barricaded the entrance and set fire to the house. The entire family of the culprit and one strange woman perished in the flames. This cruel procedure was not considered excessive by the Koryak. Only the relatives of the strange woman considered vengeance justifiable, and demanded a ransom.

During wars, the victors would put the children of the vanquished to death to prevent vengeance. In one of the myths cited above, Eme'mqut, having annihilated the warriors of the Chukchee, says to his people, "Let us go to their camp and kill their women and children. If we leave them alive, the sons of the killed men will make war upon us when they grow up."[3]

The Koryak are very rancorous, and try to avenge every insult. At the Koryak fair on the Palpal I witnessed a fight which I consider characteristic. On the third day of the fair, reindeer-races and other contests took place. Among the combatants were two young Koryak from the Opuka River, A'inqo and Xata'učăin. The former was the older and weaker, but succeeded by a clever twist in throwing his adversary. Xata'učăin soon found himself on top of A'inqo, but the combat was pronounced undecided. In the evening of the same day, Xata'učăin quietly approached A'inqo and struck him. A fight ensued, in which Xata'učăin soon gained the upper hand. Nobody interfered. Suddenly A'inqo, whose face was all battered, ceased to defend himself, and squatted down on his heels. Xata'učăin kept on striking him on the head, while A'inqo sat helplessly, his head drooping, his face covered with blood. Thus the beaten Koryak expresses his submission and pleads for his life. Xata'učăin raged like a wild beast, and would probably have killed A'inqo but for the interference of the old men. As A'inqo's relatives were expected to arrive at the fair the next day, the old men forced Xata'učăin to leave the same night in order that further fighting might be avoided. Before Xata'učăin's departure I invited him to my tent for a glass of tea, and asked him to explain to me the cause of the fight. It appeared that his enmity toward A'inqo was of old standing. When he (Xata'učăin) was a boy, the elder A'inqo used to beat him. Their fathers, too, had had

[1] See Part I, p. 239.
[2] See Case of the Archives of the Gizhiga District, 1882, No. 404.
[3] See Part I, p. 138.

23: Krasheninnikov N-3 (1736-40) 1764 Koryak

any are caught in adultery, both parties are certainly condemned to death. For this reaſon the women ſeem to take pains to make themſelves diſagreeable; for they never waſh their faces or hands, nor comb their hair, and their upper garments are dirty, ragged, and torn, the beſt being worn underneath. This they are obliged to do on account of the jealouſy of their huſbands; who ſay, that a woman has no occaſion to adorn herſelf unleſs to gain the affections of a ſtranger, for her huſband loves her without that. On the contrary, the fixed *Koreki*, and *Tchukotſkoi*, look upon it as the trueſt mark of friendſhip, when they entertain a friend, to put him to bed with their wife or daughter; and a refuſal of this civility they conſider as the greateſt affront; and are even capable of murdering a man for ſuch a contempt. This happened to ſeveral *Ruſſian* Coſſacks before they were acquainted with the cuſtoms of the people. The wives of the fixed *Koreki* endeavour to adorn themſelves as much as poſſible, painting their faces, wearing fine cloaths, and uſing various means to ſet off their perſons. In their huts they ſit quite naked, even in the company of ſtrangers.

The whole nation is rude, paſſionate, revengeful, and cruel; and the wandering *Koreki* are alſo proud and vain: they imagine that no people in the world are ſo happy as themſelves, regarding all the accounts that ſtrangers give of the advantages of other countries, as ſo many lies and fables; for, ſay they, "If you could enjoy theſe advantages at home, what made you take ſo much trouble to come to us? You ſeem to want ſeveral things which we have; we, on the contrary, are ſatisfied with what we poſſeſs, and never come to you to ſeek any thing". One great reaſon of their pride and haughtineſs may be owing to the ſettled or fixed *Koreki*, who ſhew the greateſt fear and awe of them; ſo that if one of their deer-herds ſhould come to a hut of the latter, they all run out to meet him, treat him with the greateſt

23: Krasheninnikov N-3 (1736-40) 1764 Koryak

greateſt ceremony, and bear every affront. It was never heard that the ſettled *Koreki* did the leaſt injury to any of the wanderers; and this is ſo firmly believed, that our tax-gatherers think themſelves entirely ſafe, when they converſe with thoſe who live in huts, if they are guarded by one of the rein-deer *Koreki*: which may appear very ſtrange, conſidering that the ſettled *Koreki* are much their ſuperiors in ſtrength; and it can only be attributed to that general reſpect which poor people pay to the rich: for the poverty of the ſettled *Koreki* is ſo great, that they depend upon the others in a great meaſure for their cloathing. The rein-deer *Koreki* call the others their ſlaves, and treat them accordingly; but they behave very differently to the *Tchukotſkoi*, who are ſo terrible to them, that fifty of the rein-deer *Koreki* dare not ſtand againſt twenty of theſe; and if it was not for the protection of the Coſſacks of *Anadir*, the *Tchukotſkoi* would have rooted them out by this time. As every nation has ſomething commendable, ſo the *Koreki* are more honeſt and induſtrious than the *Kamtſchadales*, and ſeem to have a greater ſenſe of ſhame.

It is difficult to form an exact account of the numbers and different families of the *Koreki*, but it is thought that all together they are more numerous than the *Kamtſchadales*. They[1] live in ſuch places as abound with moſs for their rein-deer, without regarding the ſcarcity of wood or water: in the winter time they can uſe ſnow for water, and for firing moſs or graſs, of which they have plenty every where. Their manner of living, eſpecially in the winter time, is ſtill more diſagreeable than that of the *Kamtſchadales*: for being frequently obliged to change their habitations, the huts which they come into are all frozen; and when they begin to thaw them by the fires, which are uſually made of green ſhrubs or graſs, there ariſes a ſmoke, ſo pernicious to the eyes, that it is enough to blind a perſon entirely in one day.

1. [i.e., the Reindeer Koryak -- Analyst]